

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

June 16, 2005

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

EDITH ROBLES (SOLIS), (202) 225-2167

BRIAN FARBER (BISHOP - NY), (202) 225-4331

SOLIS AND BISHOP SEND LETTER TO EPA REQUESTING ALL COMMUNICATIONS ON PESTICIDE TESTING ON CHILDREN

EPA continues to Defend pesticide study on Children

WASHINGTON, DC- Today, Representative Hilda L. Solis (D-CA), Ranking Member of the House Environment and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee, and Representative Tim Bishop (D-NY) requested copies of Administrator Johnson's remarks to Region 8 employees on June 8, 2005. In a letter dated June 13, 2005 to Administrator Johnson, the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 3607 claims that the Administrator remarked that the Children's Health and Environmental Exposure Research Study (CHEERS), a study which paid parents to expose their children to pesticides, was "ethically and scientifically sound."

Representatives Solis and Bishop also requested other communications regarding EPA's acceptance of third party studies which involve human testing of pesticides. CHEERS was cancelled on April 8, 2005, after Senators Boxer and Bill Nelson threatened to put a hold on Administrator Johnson's nomination. On May 19, 2005, the House agreed to an amendment by Representatives Solis and Bishop to the fiscal year 2006 Interior Appropriations bill which prohibits the EPA from undertaking human testing of pesticides.

The text of the letter is below:

June 16, 2005

The Honorable Stephen L. Johnson

Administrator

Environmental Protection Agency

Dear Administrator Johnson:

We are writing to express our concern about recent reports that during a June 2, 2005, meeting with Region 8 Environmental Protection Agency employees you characterized the cancellation of the Children's Health Environmental Exposure Research Study (CHEERS) as an "unfortunate result of public misunderstanding."

CHEERS would have paid families to continue risking the health of their children. It targeted families who needed the most help from the public health system and whose children were most at risk because of high rates of pesticide usage in the home. CHEERS would deliberately risk the health of children to help the pesticide industry circumvent stronger regulations designed to protect the health of our most vulnerable populations. While we support more information about

the impact of pesticides on the health of children in order to better protect children, there is no question that the CHEERS design was unethical, immoral and scientifically indefensible.

Despite the cancellation of the CHEERS study effective April 8, 2005, you have continued to publicly defend and advocate for this study. Therefore, we are writing to request additional information on EPA's work on this study. Specifically, we request that you provide the following:

- All communications (whether written, electronic or oral) relating to CHEERS that have been created, processed or otherwise modified since April 8, 2005, including copies of your remarks to Region 8 officials during the June 2 "all hands" meeting and any videos or electronic recordings of the remarks;
- All communications (whether written, electronic or oral) between yourself and Region 8 officials in response to their concerns about the CHEERS study since October 2004; and
- All communications (whether written, electronic or oral) relating to EPA's acceptance of third party studies which involve human testing of pesticides.

Since EPA may argue that some of these materials are privileged from Congressional review, we request that EPA immediately act to retain all communications that are subject to this request, and provide us with a list of such communications. Please provide these materials no later than June 27, 2005.

We reject your characterization of the cancellation of CHEERS as a "public misunderstanding," but rather the correct outcome for any study which intentionally exposes children to pesticides. Current practices of testing chemicals and pesticides on humans for the purpose of relaxing regulation of these materials must stop. We believe it is the job of the Environmental Protection Agency to protect the health of our communities, not put our children and families at greater risk.

Sincerely,

HILDA L. SOLIS TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

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